

M e m o r a n d u m

TO: Dave Bradley, Washington State Department of Ecology
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FROM: Sarah Hubbard-Gray, Hubbard Gray Consulting, Inc.

DATE: May 7, 2002

SUBJECT: Area-Wide Soil Contamination Project Draft Public Involvement Plan (Task 6.5)

1. Introduction

The purpose of this memorandum is to present the Draft Public Involvement Plan for the Area-Wide Soil Contamination Project. This draft plan considers the results of the stakeholder and Task Force interviews, associated identification of key audience and issues, Task Force comments from the February 7, 2002 Task Force meeting, and Task Force comments relating to communication principles. The elements of this public involvement plan are meant to supplement 1) the Task Force meetings, which are open to the public, and 2) the Task Force members efforts to reach out to their constituents and incorporate their concerns and ideas into the Task Force meetings and focused outreach activities.

The primary elements of the public involvement plan will be implemented once the Task Force has gained an understanding of the area-wide soil contamination issues and is considering possible strategies and recommendations. The goal of the public involvement plan is to provide information about area-wide soil contamination to the public, gather comments on preliminary and draft recommendations, and provide information on protective and remedial measures to address area-wide soil contamination concerns. The purpose of this plan is to identify the points in the process at which focused public outreach activities will take place and to describe what such activities might involve.

This Draft Public Involvement Plan will be reviewed by the Task Force and stakeholders interviewed at the beginning of the project to get their input. Comments received will be considered by the agencies as the draft plan is revised. Also, as the project evolves, the public involvement strategy may be adjusted to best meet the needs of the project.

2. Basis for This Plan

In the legislation appropriating funding for the Area-Wide Soil Contamination Project, the legislature required that the Project include public outreach and

involvement activities. This plan describes how the requirement for public outreach and involvement will be met.

This specific elements of this plan are based on several information sources, including: 1) the stakeholder and Task Force interviews, 2) the associated public involvement considerations and project objectives 3) the Task Force communication principles, 4) the chartering agencies' routine approach to implementing projects and associated public involvement, and 5) the chartering agencies' and contractor team's previous experience implementing various public outreach techniques.

The stakeholder and Task Force member interviews in particular provided several suggestions for enhancing the involvement of the public and stakeholders, including:

- The public involvement process should be implemented in a modest way, with the goal being to educate people without scaring them;
- A media and public outreach strategy should be developed in advance of the public involvement activities;
- Background information, Task Force and Work Group meeting agendas, summaries, and meeting materials should be made available on a regular and ongoing basis;
- Information presented to the public and stakeholders should be accurate and describe the various elements and perspectives on each issue; and
- Public education efforts should be implemented when information, strategies, and recommendations have been developed.

Task Force members also provided public involvement suggestions and agreed on communication principles for the project. The Task Force communication principles include:

- Both the agencies and the Task Force have a role in communication with the press and the public; the desired outcomes are collaboration and no surprises.
- There will be a role for both proactive and responsive communication approaches during the Project.
- Communication strategy must complement public involvement, but is separate from the public involvement effort. Communication efforts and strategy will be commensurate with the status of the project. For example, in the initial phases where the project is in an information gathering and learning mode, communication efforts

will be focused on responding to inquiries; as the project progresses and the Task Force moves towards findings and recommendations, communication may become more proactive.

- Communication updates will be a standing Task Force agenda item and will include a review of media contacts and other inquiries since the last Task Force meeting, a forecast of expected contacts before the next Task Force meeting, and a discussion of any evolution in key Project messages.
- The agencies' communication role encompasses responsibility to the Project, the Task Force, and the residents of Washington State. As the agency responsible for the coordinating aspects of the Project, Ecology will work with the Task Force in developing communication approaches consistent with the agency's broad communication responsibilities and the Task Force's communication interests.

The chartering agencies have prepared this plan to be consistent with the Task Force communication principles; however, as noted in the principles, public involvement and outreach on the project – while often centered on the Task Force – is not limited to the Task Force or Task Force activities. This plan also describes the activities the chartering agencies will carry out to fulfill their independent communication and outreach obligations.

3. Plans for Focused Public Outreach

Focused public outreach activities will include a number of elements, both over the life of the Project and at specific key points in the project.

Focused public outreach activities that will be ongoing over the life of the project, and support the agencies' and Task Force response to inquiries and requests for information from individuals and organizations, include:

- A. Development of educational materials
- B. Project mailing list development and maintenance
- C. Web page development and maintenance
- D. Responses to inquiries from the media and from other groups, as necessary
- E. Translation of key information into bi-lingual format

Focused public outreach activities are also anticipated when the Task Force has developed preliminary findings and recommendations and when the Task Force has developed draft findings and recommendations.

Input on Task Force preliminary findings and recommendations will be solicited through:

F. Small group/focus group meetings

Input on Task Force draft findings and recommendations will be solicited through:

G. Stakeholder interviews

H. Public meetings/workshops

The following paragraphs describe these various public involvement elements planned for the project. A discussion of the anticipated schedule for implementation and the responsible parties associated with each element is also discussed.

A. **Development of educational materials** – Project educational materials (e.g., focus sheets) will be developed on various project elements and for various target groups. The materials will be posted on the project web page and distributed to appropriate stakeholders and sectors of the community. Up to six focus sheets will be developed over the course of the project. Focus sheets will be developed on the overall Area-Wide Soil Contamination project, on the Pilot Research Project being conducted in Yakima County, on the Task Force preliminary recommendations, and on additional topics that provide value to the public involvement/education efforts.

- **Schedule** – The overall project summary and Pilot Research Project focus sheets will be developed in March and April 2002. Additional educational materials will be developed over the course of the project as new information and needs arise.
- **Responsible parties** – Hubbard Gray Consulting will coordinate with the project team and gather baseline information for each focus sheet, develop a draft and final focus sheet that incorporates project team and Task Force comments. The Agencies will review and provide comments on the drafts, provide publication numbers, and ensure that the documents meet the State of Washington publication standards. Members of the Task Force will review the draft documents and provide comments for consideration when finalizing the documents.

B. **Project mailing list development and maintenance and information/meeting notice distribution** – Using the suggestions from the stakeholder and Task Force interviews, a master mailing list with names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses will be developed. Stakeholder categories will be identified and each name will be flagged with appropriate categories relating to interests so the mailing list can be sorted for

special mailings. This master list will be used to distribute information and notices during the project. The mailing list will be updated as new people ask to be added.

In addition to the mailing list, a variety of techniques will be used at key points to distribute information and provide notice of public meetings and comment opportunities. These techniques will be tailored to best meet the needs of different communities and will likely include 1) information repositories at libraries and other community centers, 2) radio, TV and newspaper announcements, 3) newspaper ads, and 4) notifications through business and community organization newsletters and email list servers.

- **Schedule** – The mailing list will be developed in the spring of 2002, and kept up to date during the project.
- **Responsible parties** – Ecology will develop the master mailing list using the suggestions from the stakeholder and Task Force interviews. Ecology will also supplement the list with names from other appropriate Ecology mailing/project lists. The consultant team and Task Force members will provide names of people requesting to be added to the list over the course of the project. Ecology will prepare and distribute all mailings associated with the public involvement plan implementation using the master mailing list. Hubbard Gray Consulting will take the lead in developing information and public meeting notices. Ecology will take the lead in getting the notices distributed and be responsible for associated media communication and coordination.

C. **Web page development and maintenance** – A project web page will be developed and maintained within Ecology's main web page. Information developed as part of the project will be posted on the web page to ensure broad public access (including Task Force and Work Group meeting agendas, summaries and materials, educational materials, meeting announcements, etc.).

- **Schedule** – Ecology set up the project web site in February 2002. The web site will be maintained regularly and new information will be added to the web site as it becomes available.
- **Responsible parties** – Ecology will develop and maintain the web page. The consultant team will provide documents prepared for the project to Ecology in pdf format for posting to the web page.

D. **Media outreach** – Considering the communication principles developed in conjunction with the Task Force, and the suggestions from the stakeholder interviews, an approach for coordinating with

and informing the media will be developed. In the initial phases of the project, as information is gathered and more is learned, media coordination will focus on responding to inquiries. Key message points on various project related issues will be developed to assist in responding to media inquiries. These message points will be updated as the project progresses and more is learned. As the Task Force moves toward findings and recommendations, media outreach will become more proactive. At this point, news releases and educational materials on various elements of the project will be developed and sent to the media. An effort will be made to coordinate directly with specific reporters to facilitate accurate coverage on the project.

- **Schedule** – Message points will be developed in March and April 2002 to be prepared for unsolicited requests for information from the media. As public involvement elements of the project are implemented, news releases and educational materials will be distributed and coordination with the media will be facilitated.
- **Responsible parties** – Ecology will take the lead in developing the message points and news releases and will be responsible for coordinating directly with the media. The consultant team will be available to review draft message points and news releases and provide comments. Task Force members will be asked to review drafts and provide comments. The Task Force Co-Chairs will be available to discuss the project with the media if requested.

E. **Translate key information into bi-lingual format** – To ensure that the Spanish speaking community can track the project and read key project materials, a member of Ecology's translation team will translate all of the public education related documents. A member from Ecology's translation team will also be asked to attend the Eastern Washington public meetings/workshops and small group/focus meetings to assist in communicating with the Spanish speaking participants. In addition, if the need is identified, key materials will be translated into other languages and associated support to non-English speaking community members will be provided.

- **Schedule** – As public information is developed over the course of the project, a member of Ecology's translation team will translate key documents and prepare them for production. A translation team member will attend public meetings in Eastern Washington when they are held.
- **Responsible parties** – Ecology will be responsible for translating the documents. The consultant team and Task

Force will make recommendations on which documents need translation.

- F. **Small-group meetings/focus group meetings** – Small group or focus group meetings will be held when the Task Force is developing preliminary recommendations. Stakeholder groups and representatives from geographic areas with specific interests will be invited to these meetings. The meetings will be used to present information about the project and get feedback on issues, concerns, and suggestions that should be considered when selecting preliminary recommendations. The intent is to provide input/information to the Task Force that will be considered as they are refining the draft recommendations.

The regular Task Force meetings are being held at west and east side locations to provide ongoing opportunities for public participation and comment. These small/focus group meetings will be scheduled in the evening on the same day as the Task Force meetings. This will allow a variety of groups to participate and minimize travel and project costs. Three small/focus group meetings will be held under this task (one in Wenatchee, one in Yakima, and one in Western Washington).

At each of the meetings, a general presentation will be given to the large group and then the stakeholders would be invited to join specific focused groups for question and answer sessions and group discussions. Responses from the stakeholder surveys will be used to develop the invitation list. The stakeholder groups will likely include: agricultural associations and community, local agency representatives, medical associations and community, environmental and children's health groups, business associations and business representatives, school and daycare representatives, and neighborhood and community council representatives.

In addition, the presentations and handouts developed for these small/focus group meetings will be organized in packets for each of the Task Force members. The Task Force members will be asked to use these tools to present information to their respective constituents, gather comments, and consider the input as preliminary recommendations are developed.

- **Schedule** – The small/focus group meetings will be held after the Task Force meetings in the late fall and winter of 2002/2003, as they are considering preliminary recommendations and preparing to make draft recommendations.
- **Responsible parties** – Hubbard Gray Consulting will lead the effort, draft recommended meeting formats and

strategies, develop and coordinate the meeting notification effort, and coordinate and organize the small/focus group meetings. Appropriate members of the consultant team will assist in the development of presentation and display materials and attend and participate in the meetings. Task Force members will be asked to review and comment on the draft format, strategy, and handouts. Task Force members will also be asked to attend and participate in the meetings and use the meeting tools to present information to their respective constituents. Agency staff will be responsible for reviewing the draft meeting format and strategies, notification process, draft presentation and display materials. Appropriate agency staff may also present portions of the presentation and will attend each of the small/focus group meetings.

- G. **Follow up interviews with stakeholders** – Follow up interviews with the stakeholders that were originally interviewed at the onset of the project, and others if deemed appropriate and valuable, (excluding Task Force members, ex-officio members, and agency staff) will be conducted to get their perspectives and comments on the draft recommendations. This will 1) ensure that comments on the draft recommendations are gathered from the various affected stakeholders, 2) provide an opportunity to check back with stakeholders that have tracked the project process, but not been directly involved, and 3) gain insights on future public education efforts that should occur in conjunction with implementing the recommendations.

The educational materials (e.g., focus sheets) developed as part of the project, along with the Task Force draft recommendations, will be sent to the stakeholders. Telephone discussions will then be held with the stakeholders to gather their input on the draft recommendations and implementation. Questions developed as part of the public meetings/workshops will be used to guide the interviews.

- **Schedule** – The interviews will be held after the Task Force has developed draft recommendations, anticipated to be in March, 2003.
- **Responsible parties** – Hubbard Gray Consulting will coordinate and conduct the interviews. Agency staff may participate in some or all of the interviews. A brief draft and final summary of the interviews will be developed. Agency representatives will review the draft summary. The interview summary will be provided to the Task Force members for their review.

- H. **Public workshops** – Public meetings/workshops will be held to ensure that the overall public is provided the opportunity to learn about the project and provide comments on the draft Task Force recommendations. One series of duplicate meetings/workshops will be held at three locations (greater Seattle area, Yakima and Wenatchee). This meeting series will be held after the Task Force has developed draft recommendations and is seeking public input. Both the Task Force and agencies will review and consider the public comments as final recommendations are developed.

In addition, the presentations and handouts developed for these public workshops will be organized in packets for each of the Task Force members. The Task Force members will be asked to use these tools to present information to their respective constituents, gather comments, and consider the input as final recommendations are developed.

- **Schedule** – The public workshop series will be held when the Task Force has developed preliminary recommendations, anticipated to be in March, 2003.
- **Responsible parties** – Hubbard Gray Consulting will lead the effort, draft a recommended meeting format and strategy, develop and coordinate a notification strategy, and coordinate and organize the public meetings. Appropriate members of the consultant team will assist in the development of a presentation and displays and attend and participate in the public meetings. Task Force members will be asked to review and comment on the draft format and strategy and all members of the Task Force will be asked to attend and participate in at least one of the public meetings. Agency staff will be responsible for reviewing draft public meeting format and strategies, meeting notifications, and draft presentation and display materials. Appropriate agency staff may also present portions of the presentation and will attend each of the public meetings.